



Northgate Framework Resolution
Draft Advice #9

Date: June 27, 2006

To: Mayor Greg Nickels and Members of the Seattle City Council

From: Ron LaFayette, Chair, and Michelle Rupp, Vice-Chair, on Behalf of the Northgate Stakeholders Group

Subject: DRAFT STAKEHOLDERS ADVICE #9 CONCERNING THE COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT PLAN (CTIP)

The resolution establishing the Northgate Stakeholders Group assigned the Stakeholders the task of reviewing and commenting upon the proposed Coordinated Transportation Improvement Plan (CTIP). The CTIP represents the framework through which the City will carry out future transportation investments in the Northgate area.

Because of the critical role transportation investment plays in Northgate area redevelopment, Stakeholders have devoted a considerable amount of time to responding to CTIP proposals and drafts presented by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). Formal Advice has been provided to SDOT, the Mayor and City Council in three separate instances:

- On June 24, 2004, Stakeholders accepted the CTIP scope of work, including a plan for Stakeholder participation in the planning process.
- On February 28, 2005, Stakeholders recognized SDOT's response to Stakeholder recommendations and endorsed CTIP Planning, Financing and Technical Assumptions.
- On September 9, 2005, Stakeholders again recognized SDOT responses and endorsed the full utilization of the Department's Evaluation Criteria in all further stages of the CTIP process. The application of these criteria would subsequently aid in determining which possible street, bicycle and pedestrian improvements would be given highest priority.

SDOT has now completed the draft Coordinated Transportation Improvement Plan, and an accompanying Environmental Impact Statement. *Having reviewed the plan at each stage, the Stakeholders endorse it as the next major step in guaranteeing appropriate and sufficient transportation investment in the Northgate area. Directed by this plan, the City now must take a number of additional, critical steps to guarantee that transportation priorities are carried out; that the necessary financial resources are secured; and that impacts of new development are recognized and responded to. This Advice identifies ways in which the City must respond to this implementation challenge.*

The Stakeholders reviewed this draft CTIP plan at CTIP Subcommittee meetings on May 18 and May 30 and at a Stakeholders Group meeting on May 9. Stakeholders completed deliberation at their June 27 meeting.

Throughout the CTIP development process, the Stakeholders and our CTIP Subcommittee have emphasized several major themes, all of which have been responded to in the draft plan, but remain subject to the strength of the upcoming implementation stage. These include, but are not limited to:

- The need to significantly improve the ability of pedestrians to move safely throughout the area.
- The need to improve East-West connections including walkability of the Northgate Way I-5 underpass as well as the more focused investments on North-South arterials.
- The means to respond to the impact of traffic both on commerce and residential areas in a way that will advance both economic vitality and quality of life.
- Emphasis on all transportation modes.
- Attention to all actions that improve transportation and not just major capital improvements.
- The need to recognize as a special transportation investment the construction of an expanded walkway area connecting the Northgate shopping areas, Transit Center, and transportation options with North Seattle Community College.

Stakeholder review of the draft CTIP has underscored the nature of this Plan as a blueprint requiring future actions to make it come alive. In particular, these specific steps must be attended to in conjunction with the CTIP's ratification:

1) Building Sidewalks

SDOT has noted that sidewalk projects are often difficult to fund, especially absent related improvements to arterials. Stakeholders call for the CTIP to place less reliance on the small dedicated fund being utilized within SDOT for this purpose, since the amount available is presently insufficient to keep up with requests from all of Seattle's neighborhoods.

2) Meeting Bicyclists' Needs

The CTIP is just the beginning of an important effort to separately identify and attend to the specific needs of Northgate area bicyclists. It is important to recognize that bicyclists' needs are often distinct from those of pedestrians and motorized vehicles. CTIP should be used as the jumping off point to the development of a Bike Master Plan by SDOT.

3) Managing Parking

The CTIP includes a number of proposals developed by DPD and SDOT to adjust parking regulations to match requirements in other commercial zones of the city. There is also a proposal to facilitate innovative parking solutions created by Northgate area property owners. CTIP also provides for ongoing review of on-street parking restrictions developed by SDOT in conjunction with residential neighborhoods. The Stakeholders have been assured that such reviews will continue to incorporate the neighborhoods' views in determining whether such restrictions are appropriate.

4) Responding to Unforeseen Impacts

Improvements in arterials and signalization are meaningful steps to respond to anticipated traffic increases generated by new commercial projects. The impact of these investments on all commercial and residential areas must be carefully monitored. However, it is impossible to predict all of the impacts of new development on residential streets, because traffic on those streets is monitored less frequently. Thus, Stakeholders call for SDOT to adopt as a standard operating procedure a more proactive system to identify and respond to residential streets that are experiencing problematic traffic volume increases.

5) Guaranteeing Sufficient Funding

The draft CTIP has identified a number of funding sources which must be drawn upon so that the transportation investment priorities identified by the Plan will be realized. Thus, the order of projects pursued will depend in part on the availability of special funding and is not fully predictable. The Stakeholders call upon the City to increase its own levels of transportation investment and aggressively seek regional, state, and federal funding to make certain all high priority projects are completed.

6) Monitoring Progress

Because the success of the Coordinated Transportation Improvement Plan is wholly dependent on its effective implementation, the Stakeholders call for the formulation of an annual progress report process whereby SDOT and the City report their CTIP-related actions to the Stakeholders and thus the community. This process should be used to review the extent to which each element of the CTIP is being fully attended to, and to gain comment on any major actions that were not anticipated in the Plan. The creation of such a process will also provide executive and legislative officials with information on the extent to which progress has been made that they can use in subsequent decision making, including transportation funding decisions.

The process should include these steps.

- The SDOT director should designate the person who will carry out the annual assignment to prepare the report on the agency and City's behalf.
- The report should detail the specific actions taken during the previous year on the projects prioritized in the CTIP; the actions expected to be taken in the upcoming year; and what is anticipated in ensuing years. This would enable the Stakeholders and Northgate community to formally assess the extent to which the plan has been implemented.
- The report should also evaluate the funding streams currently available for CTIP projects; any changes in levels of anticipated funding; and the steps being taken to secure sufficient funding.
- The report should be provided to the Stakeholders in advance of the scheduled Stakeholder meeting for review by the CTIP subcommittee and ultimate review of the Stakeholder group.
- The results of the Stakeholder review should be communicated to SDOT, the Mayor and the City Council.